

A SPECIAL ISSUE of the SOUTH ASIAN SURVEY (SAS)
on
Covid19 in South Asia: Impacts and the Way Forward

Call for Papers

The new coronavirus or Covid19 began to spread from China in the early 2020 and has become a global pandemic within a couple of months. Since then, Covid19 has infected millions of people and killed hundreds of thousands in over 200 countries. But the overall damage of the corona crisis is more extensive and may have long term impacts worldwide. Up to this point, the global economy has suffered an estimated loss of more than US\$8.5 trillion (AB, 2020), and the cost is increasing every passing day. Not only that, the disease has brought an incredible disruption to the way life of people all over the earth. Except for the environment, an area that might have benefited so far, most of the economic and social sectors have been adversely affected due to Covid19. Though countries, both big and small, have tried to face the COVID-19 challenge and address the emergent difficulties, none has become a complete success in this regard. Overall, some countries have remained more successful in limiting the number of infections, deaths, and levels of disruptions in the social and economic lives of people. In contrast, some others have remained less effective in dealing with Covid19 fallouts.

Like most of the countries in the world, the South Asian countries have also been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Rather the severity of the pandemic has been far greater for some countries in the region, though all nations have tried their best to avoid the impacts of the disease with different degrees of success. For example, India first tried with countrywide lockdown to contain the spread of the disease, so did Nepal. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and the Maldives applied lockdowns while Sri Lanka imposed quarantine and curfews. Pakistan tried “smart lockdown” with its effort to handle the crisis. Moreover, “Countries have also instituted various levels of restrictions on international travel, some countries have completely sealed off their land borders and grounded most international flights” (Wikipedia, 2020). They have been trying to cope with the disease with medical treatment and social distancing measures too. Governments of the South Asian countries have also attempted to coordinate a response to the pandemic through the regional organization, the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

Though these measures have their impacts, they have not remained that successful in containing the disease and arrest the economic fallouts. For instance, India has become the 3rd highest country in the world with its number of infections, totaling about 3.56 million, of which about 64,000 people died as of August 30, 2020 (Worldometer, <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>). Bangladesh and Pakistan have followed India

distantly in terms of infections and the number of deaths. Smaller countries like Nepal, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Bhutan have their shares too.

So far, the economic and social costs of the crisis have remained enormous to the South Asian economies. Take the case of the economic growth of India and Bangladesh. In the pre-Covid19 period, they were growing at par with some of the fastest-growing economies in the world. Covid19 has brought a grinding halt to that. India may experience even an economic contraction in 2020-21, while Pakistan's economy is almost sure to contract. The same is going to happen with the economies of Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. Some prime and vibrant sectors - like Information Technology (IT) of India, Readymade Garments (RMG) of Bangladesh, Cotton and Textiles of Pakistan, Tourism of the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bhutan have been severely affected. Both exports and imports of these may record marginal growth or most probably decline. Many factories have been closed for ever and millions of workers have rendered jobless in the process. The internal migrant workers in India and Bangladesh have suffered miserably. A rise in domestic violence and social tensions may also be the consequence of economic fallouts. And in all these, women and underprivileged segments of the society have become more vulnerable economically and socially.

Aims and Scope

This Special Issue of SAS provides a thematic space for researchers to focus, in their papers, on the possible economic and social impacts of Covid19 on the South Asian countries. Looking at the SAARC region as a unit for analyzing various effects could be a welcome addition. Covid19 may affect women, vulnerable segments disproportionately in the South Asian societies. Their issues could be investigated and analyzed. To that end, authors are encouraged to submit original articles on, but not limited to, the following themes and sub-topics related to Covid19:

- Impacts on the economic growth of South Asian economies
- Impacts on trade, investment and financial sector
- Sectoral impacts (like RMG of Bangladesh, IT of India, Textile of Pakistan, Tourism of all the countries, etc.)
- Social impacts, particularly on women and vulnerable segments of societies
- Impacts of initiatives and measures taken up by governments and non-government organizations to reducing the spread and other effects
- Lessons of Covid19 and the way forward for the countries of South Asia

Authors should prepare their manuscript according to the 'Guide for Authors' available from the online submission page of the journal (<https://journals.sagepub.com/author-instructions/SAS>). All the papers will be peer-reviewed as per the review procedures of SAS.

Manuscript Submission

All the submissions for the special issue will be accepted only via the online submission and peer review system, SAGE Track SAGE <https://peerreview.sagepub.com/sas>. Please read the journal submission guidelines and then visit SAGE Track SAGE to create your account and submit the paper.

Important Dates:

- Paper submission due: November 30, 2020
- First notification: December 31, 2020
- Revision: January 15, 2021
- Final decision: January 25, 2021
- Publication date: March 2021

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